

**Life Group Topic #32**  
**Unity**  
**September 27, 2009**

**WELCOME:** (15 minutes)

What is one of the strangest gifts you ever received?

**WORSHIP:** (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

**WORD APPLICATION:** (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following sermon summary before moving to the heart of this section: the discussion around the application questions.

Unity is an incredibly fragile thing. We face three enemies of unity...

- The world we live in is captivated by a philosophy of life that places little priority on forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Our flesh...The desires of our inner beings as described in Mark 7:21-23
- The devil as described in John 8:44.

In your experience, how has the unity among Christians been affected by these three enemies?

The mark of community...true biblical unity...is not the absence of conflict but the presence of a reconciling spirit.

- In light of I Corinthians 12:14-20 why is conflict inevitable?
- How is John 13:35 to be our guide?
- How do Colossians 3:12-15 guide us in conflict?

How does II Corinthians 10:3-5 fit this issue?

Comment on Ed Silvosa's definition of a spiritual stronghold...

*A spiritual stronghold is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes us to accept as unchangeable situations and thoughts that are contrary to the will of God*

Sometimes the conflicts that we encounter are energized by past experiences and hurts that were never resolved and lie dormant within us waiting to velcro to some new hurt that arises. So an understanding of forgiveness is crucial.

- How is forgiveness not a feeling but an act of the will? Can you illustrate this?
- How is forgiveness not just forgetting? When God says that he "remembers your sins no more" (Isaiah 43:25), is he saying He cannot remember our sins or He won't remember them? Can you illustrate this?

- How is forgiveness not just excusing? Forgiveness says, “We both know that what you did was wrong and without excuse. But since God has forgiven me, I forgive you.” Can you illustrate this?
- Forgiveness can be a costly activity because you absorb a liability someone else deserves to pay. Can you illustrate?

Believe and act as if you have far more in common with other believers than what divides you. What would that look like?

Believe and act as if God has a purpose for bringing us together in this local church. What would that look like?

Believe and act as if love is the most excellent way of living and worshiping together. What would that look like?

**WITNESS: (15 minutes)**

**This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolding those we reach into the Life Group.**